

**Requested Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:  
a heating member which includes a first region and a second region:  
the second region located in a predetermined position in the axial direction with respect to the first region;  
a heating unit which is provided inside the heating member and which includes at least one of a first heating member for heating the first region and a second heating member for heating the second region;  
a main control unit which carries out at least a first control mode and a second control mode;  
wherein the first control mode performs control to drop the temperatures in the first and second regions from a fixing temperature by a predetermined temperature, with specific timing corresponding to a number of mediums on which an image is to be formed, at least once, while an image formation is being executed at the fixing temperature; and  
wherein the second control mode turns off either the first heating member or the second heating member which has priority over the other member, the priority being determined according to the number of mediums on which an image is to be formed, with predetermined timing corresponding to the temperature supplied in the first control mode, when the image formation is completed.
2. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the first region is disposed at the center of the heating member, and the second region is disposed at both ends of the first region, and when control to drop the temperatures has been performed once by the first control mode, the second heating member has priority over the first heating member in being turned off first.

3. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

a third control mode which is carried out by the main control unit and which returns the temperatures in the first and second regions to the fixing temperature stepwise when the temperatures in the first and second regions have been lowered from the fixing temperature in the first control mode after the main control unit image formation is completed, wherein the temperature of the first heating member or the second heating member to which priority has been given by the first control mode is returned first.

4. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, further comprising:

a third control mode which is carried out by the main control unit and which returns the temperatures in the first and second regions to the fixing temperature stepwise when the temperatures in the first and second regions have been lowered from the fixing temperature in the first control mode after the main control unit image formation is completed, wherein the temperature of the second heating member to which priority has been given by the first control mode is returned first.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling a heating unit, comprising:

(1) when an image formation is executed at a first temperature, performing control to drop the temperature of a heating member to a second temperature lower than the first temperature, with predetermined timing corresponding to a number of mediums on which an image is to be formed, at least once;

(2) when the image formation is completed, turning off the heating member with predetermined timing corresponding to the second temperature lowered from the first temperature stepwise[[:]],when the heating member composed of a first heating member and a second heating member is turned off, either the first heating member or the second heating

member which has priority over the other heating member is turned off first, the priority being determined according to the number of mediums on which an image is to be formed;  
and

(3) after the image formation is completed, returning from the second temperature to the first temperature stepwise.

6. (Canceled).

7. (Currently Amended) The method of controlling a heating unit according to claim [[6]] 5, wherein

the timing with which the first and second heating members are turned off is determined by the second temperature obtained in dropping from the first temperature.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of controlling a heating unit according to claim 5, wherein

when the temperature of the heating member composed of a first heating member and a second heating member is recovered stepwise, shifting the timing with which the temperature in a first region heated by the first heating member rises from the timing with which the temperature in a second region heated by the second heating member rises.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of controlling a heating unit according to claim 8, wherein

the timing with which the first and second regions are raised is determined by the second temperature obtained in dropping from the first temperature.

10. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:

a heating member includes a first heating member which heats a first region and a second heating member which heats a second region;

heating means for heating the heating member;

dropping means for dropping the heating member kept at a first temperature to a second temperature lower than the first temperature with predetermined timing corresponding to a number of mediums on which an image is to be formed;

OFF means for turning off, first, either the first heating member or the second heating member which has priority over the other heating member, the priority being determined according to the number of mediums on which an image is to be formed with predetermined timing according to the second temperature; and

recovering means for returning the heating member kept at the second temperature to the first temperature with predetermined timing corresponding to the number of mediums on which an image is to be formed, wherein the temperature of either the first heating member or the second heating member which has the priority is returned first.

11. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the OFF means shifts the timing with which the first heating member is turned off from the timing with which the second heating member is turned off, when the heating member composed of the first heating member and the second heating member is turned off.

12. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to claim 11, wherein the timing with which the first and second heating member are turned off is determined by the second temperature obtained when the dropping means drops the temperature from the first temperature.

13. (Previously Presented) The image formation apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the recovering means shifts the timing with which the temperature in the first region is raised from the timing with which the temperature in the second region is raised.

14. (Original) The image formation apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the timing with which the temperatures in the first and second regions are raised is determined by the second temperature obtained when the dropping means drops the temperature from the first temperature.

15. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the first region is disposed at the center of the heating member, and the second region is disposed at both ends of the first region,

wherein when control to drop the temperatures by the first control mode is not performed, the first heating member has priority over the second heating member in being turned off.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of controlling a heating unit according to claim [[6]] 5, wherein when the first heating member heats the center of the heating member, and the second heating member heats both ends of the heating member, and the step of turning off the ~~temperatures~~ heating member is performed at once,

the second heating member has priority over the first heating member in being turned off.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of controlling a heating unit according to claim [[6]] 5, wherein the temperature of either the first heating member or the second heating member which has priority over the other heating member is returned first.